



Navigations



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September 2001

NOAA Employee Worklife Center is Available to Help You and Your Family Cope With the Aftermath of the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

On September 11th, the United States suffered a loss of life and stability. Undoubtedly our lives have taken a sudden change.

In the upcoming days and weeks you and your family may experience emotions such as anxiety, anger, helplessness, fear, sadness and disbelief or shock. It is difficult to understand how or why terrorist attacks occur.

You may be consumed with the event and find you have difficulty in concentrating on anything other than your families safety. Sleeping and eating habits may be disrupted. These feelings are all normal. In time as the country and our lives resume, our changed habits will return to normal.

To help ease the transition, talk about your fears and feelings with your co-workers, family members and friends. Seek out avenues that provide support and reinforcement; spirituality, family, trusted friends and support groups. Try to resume a normal schedule at work and home as quickly as possible with the understanding that processing your emotions will take time. Be patient with yourself and others as everyone reacts to traumatic events differently and there is no one definitive method to healing.

Your children may be frightened and want to stay closer to you than usual. Talk to your children about your feelings and allow them to discuss theirs with you. Reassure children that you are there for them and their feelings are healthy. Encourage them with love and support to ask as many questions as they need to and to discuss the events as often as needed. Let them know that terrorist attacks are very rare and that authorities are doing everything that can be done to keep America safe from future attacks. Reiterate to children that you and police, firemen and teachers are doing everything possible to keep them safe.

While discussing concerns with children, add any tips you have for personally dealing with the tragedy. To heighten children's sense of security, provide a phone number where you can be reached during the day should they become worried.

Do the best you can to stick to normal routines, eat well-balanced meals and get enough sleep.

In obtaining support, remember to utilize benefits NOAA has put in place to assist employees and loved ones. Call the NOAA Employee Worklife Center for resources and referrals and/or NOAA EAP at 1-877-234-5151 to speak with a counselor.

EVENTS SCHEDULE

*Click on links for flyers and resource lists.
Please note that the dates and locations of events
listed below are subject to change.*

Note: Flyers and materials will be available 1 week prior to the event.

October

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 10-11-2001 | 1:00 - 2:00pm Coping with Grief and Trauma Seminar – Bldg. 3, Rm. 4527 |
| 10-16-2001 | 1:00 - 2:00pm Nutrition Seminar -Bldg. 3, Rm. 4527 TO VIEW SEMINAR FLIER |
| 10-18-2001 | 11:30am - 1:00pm Health and Wellness Resource Fair – Cafeteria, Building 3, Silver Spring TO VIEW RESOURCE LIST |
| TBA | FIELD - Worklife Meet & Greet |
| 10-25-2001 | 11:30am - 1:00pm Worklife Resource Fair. Silver Spring -Cafeteria, Bldg. 3 |

Please note that all seminars in the future will be videotaped and archived on the Employee Worklife web site, rather than web cast, so that those interested in viewing the sessions can do so at their leisure.

Discussion Groups Now Forming!

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alzheimer's Disease | Breast Cancer |
| Chronic Illness | Diabetes |
| Weight Management | Special Needs Children |

*Please contact the Worklife Center at
1-866-NOAAWLC if you are interested in
participating in person or by phone.*

Need Worklife information fast?

E-mail or call in questions to NOAA's Worklife Advisor on:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| ❖ Parenting and Child Care | ❖ Aging and Elder Care |
| ❖ Balancing Work & Family | ❖ Health and Wellness |
| ❖ Plus much more! | |

(866) NOAAWLC

TDD: 301-713-9470

cathleen.harrington@noaa.gov

How Family Members Can be Supportive by Magellan Health Services

After exposure to a traumatic event many people experience unsettling reactions that are out of the ordinary for them. Exposure to these incidents may result in a disruption of persons physical and emotional well being. These unsettling reactions are not uncommon; in fact they are normal. No one is immune from these responses, regardless of your age or past experience. Often these reactions appear immediately after the event or they may appear hours, days or weeks later. The following are some coping tips that may help your family member deal with exposure to this type of trauma.

- ***Listen, listen, listen*** – One of the most important needs after exposure to a traumatic event is the need to talk about it. It may be difficult for you to hear, or you may get tired of hearing about the same story, but talking is a critical part of your loved ones recovery. Be supportive and sympathetic, but try to avoid overreacting. Your loved one needs to tell his or her own story. If your loved one tries to shield you from the event by refusing to talk about it, you should not force him or her to talk about it.
- ***Don't encourage your loved one to quit work*** - After crisis emotions run high. It is easy to rush into things without thinking. While it may be difficult for your loved one to face going back to work, returning to work may actually be the best way to recover from the crisis. Work can provide the support of others who have been through the same thing you have
- ***Include the whole family in the healing process*** – Both you and your spouse may feel that you should protect your children from the upsetting event. But they will undoubtedly know something is wrong. If you try to hide the truth from them, your children may think they are somehow to blame. This can be a stressful time for them too, and they may need some help getting through it.
- ***Watch for signs of strain in your relationship*** – Marital problems are common after exposure to a traumatic event. If you experience this, please contact the EAP.
- ***Take care of yourself*** – you also need some support. Ask family or friends for help, and don't be afraid to call the EAP for assistance.

Helping Children Cope with Trauma

by the American Counseling Association (ACA)

After a disaster, children are most afraid that the event will recur, that they or someone they love will be hurt or killed, or that they may be separated from those they love and be left alone. Here are ways that you can help children cope with trauma:

1. Allow children to express their feelings about what has happened. Share your own feelings with them.
2. Reassure children, repeatedly, that they are safe and that they are loved.
3. Be honest with children about what has occurred and provide facts about what happened. Children usually know when something is being sugar-coated. Details should be age-appropriate, but don't try to hide the main facts.
4. Help children return to a normal routine as soon as possible.
5. Spend extra time with your child, especially doing something fun or relaxing for both of you.
6. Remember the importance of touch. A hug can reassure children that they are loved. Several hugs are even better.
7. Review family safety procedures to help children feel prepared the next time an emergency situation occurs.
8. Talk with teachers, babysitters, day care providers, and others who may be with your children so they understand how the children have been affected and how the children are reacting to the events.
9. Watch for signs of repetitive play in which children reenact all or part of the disaster. Such play may be the child's way of showing how deeply the event has affected the child.
10. Praise and recognize responsible behavior and reassure children that their feelings are normal in response to an abnormal situation.
11. If children seem deeply affected by an event, and don't seem to respond to the positive actions described above, seek professional assistance by talking to a school counselor, your community mental health group or a counselor.

Employers Must Respond Positively to Terrorist Tragedy – produced by ACA

As all American institutions will be affected by the terrorist tragedy inflicted upon the country, so will the nation's workplaces. The response or lack thereof by the country's employers can make a profound difference in the lives of their workers. Most important is the need for the leaders to show high levels of sensitivity. Here are some suggestions about how to handle this challenging situation:

- 1) Gather employees together to demonstrate strength and solidarity. Have top executives, those respected for their vision and clear thinking, speak about the future and the need to unite to endure.
- 2) Ask for volunteers to spearhead an effort to encourage blood donation and/or raise money for Red Cross or Salvation Army to help them provided needed services. Give employees time off with pay to give blood.
- 3) If any employees are activated into the National Guard or military reserves provide full support for the workers and their families.
- 4) Give people an opportunity to vent their feelings. At difficult times like these, workers need times to express what they are feeling.
- 5) When tragedy hits, we all need time to grieve. Consider bringing in mental health professionals to provide advice and counsel.

Corrections...

Last month's Did You Know Section, should have read, "Eating less more often will provide you with more energy throughout your day."

Last month's Eating for Health question #3, should have read, "Fat yields more calories than protein and carbohydrates combined."

Coping Tips – Magellan Health Services

- ❖ Talk to a family member or friend. Talking is the best medicine.
- ❖ Take a walk or exercise.
- ❖ Get plenty of sleep.
- ❖ Maintain a good diet.
- ❖ Express your feelings about the event to a priest, rabbi or pastor.
- ❖ Go to a movie or rent a video.
- ❖ Meditate or try some relaxation exercises.
- ❖ Make time for Leisure activities.
- ❖ Call the EAP if symptoms persist.

Please refer to the Office of Personnel Management Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/ehs/pdf/trauma.pdf> to access *Handling Traumatic Events: A Manager's Handbook*. This handbook provides advice for senior leaders and immediate supervisors on what they can do to help their employees and work groups recover from trauma.

Helpful Links

Want to help?: <http://www.libertyunite.org>
Commerce Sites: <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>
Coping with the Aftermath of a Disaster:
<http://www.helping.apa.org/daily/tassey.html>
Psychology Mobilizes to Help a Nation in Pain:
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep01/trauma.html>
Sharing your Grief and Memories:
<http://www.careerplanning.about.com/library/weekly/aa051801b.html>
The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors:
<http://www.taps.org>
Disaster Response Network: <http://www.apa.org/practice/drn.html>
Help With Trauma: <http://www.apa.org/psychnet/coverage.html>
Warning Signs of Trauma-related Stress:
<http://www.apa.org/practice/ptsd.html>
Resources on Coping with Traumatic Events:
<http://www.apa.org/practice/ptresources.html>
Managing Traumatic Stress:
<http://www.helping.apa.org/therapy/traumaticstress.html>
Talking With Youth About Traumatic Events:
<http://www.apa.org/practice/ptforum.html>
How To Find a Therapist: <http://www.helping.apa.org/find.html>
Diversity in Times of Crisis: <http://www.diversityinc.com>
Suggested Steps for Reaching Out to Schools:
<http://www.apa.org/practice/ptsteps.html>
Reactions and Guidelines for Children Following Trauma/Disaster: <http://www.apa.org/practice/ptguidelines.html>
Helping Children Cope:
<http://www.womencentral.msn.com/parenting/articles/tragedy.asp>
<http://www.content.health.msn.com/content/article/1728.88771>
American Counseling Association: <http://www.counseling.org>
American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>